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Dr. RESBURY's  
S E R M O N

Preached before the

QUEEN

A T

WHITE-HALL,

*August* 21. 1692.

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*G. Bosville 192:  
pp. 62*

DEARBURY'S  
SERMON

QUEDIN

AT

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By *NATHANAEL RESBURY*, D.D.  
Rector of *S. Paul Shadwell*, and Chaplain  
in Ordinary to Their Majesties.

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L O N D O N ,

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# SERMON

Preached before the

## QUEEN

AT

## WILTSHIRE-HALL

August 1891

By NATHANIEL PESSARD, D.D.  
Rector of St Paul's Cathedral, and Chaplain  
in Ordinary to Her Majesty

Published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge

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## Job xxxiiij. 22, 23, 24.

*His soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers. If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto Man his uprightness: Then is he gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down unto the pit; I have found a ransom.*

**T**Hese words have something in them, that seems dark and mysterious, as a great many passages, in this Book of *Job* particularly, have. It is one entire and lofty Poem, and not onely so, but one of the ancientest pieces of Writing that was ever deliver'd to the World; and so, must needs have things in it very difficult; being either Proverbial expressions, peculiar to the Age or Countries amongst whom they were then in use, or else References to the Histories of those Times; which being now wholly out of reach, render the passages that concern them, so much the more abstruse and unintelligible. However, if we consider the drift of this Chapter, where my

Text is, it may make for clearing up these words, and the design of that Subject of discourse I intend from them.

*Elibu*, one of *Job's* Visitants, is remembering him of the various methods God is pleas'd to take, in teaching and disciplining Mankind; with all his gracious Ends and Designs in these ways of instruction, *viz.* to bring Men to the knowledge both of God himself, and of their own state. He shows further, all those mixtures of goodness, the softnings and mitigations, the allays or refreshments, that God is pleas'd to minister, even under the sharpest afflictions, which he thinks fit sometimes to bring upon Men.

The ways of instruction represented in this *Chapter*, are,

1. By *Visions* or *Night-dreams*. When the Mind was retir'd from the business and noise of the day, and was more receptive of divine impressions. A way, which it pleas'd God to take something more frequently, as a Ministry of knowledge, when Men had no other supply of Revelation; no written Oracles of God for a rule and standard of their belief and actions. *Ver. 14, 15, 16. God speaketh*

speakeſh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a Dream, in a Viſion of the night-- then he openeth the Ears of men and ſealetſh their inſtruction.

But then, as God was wont to inſtruct Mankind, by *Viſions* or *Dreams*, ſo he had another way, and that more uſual, that which (as it might be circumſtanc'd) might prove much more inſtructive, more effectual for his correction and amendment every way.

And this was, by afflictions and calamities of life: Eſpecially *Diseases* and *Sickneſſes*, which were not intended meerly to afflict Mankind, or make their lives uneaſie or uncomfortable; but to give them a ſight of themſelves, to remember them of their guilt to teach them their duty, how they may learn to carry themſelves before God, with all ſubmiſſion to his Will, dependance upon his Providence, and repentance for the irregularities of Life, by which they have provok'd God. *Ver. 19.* and ſo on. *He is chaſten'd alſo with pains upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with ſtrong pain, ſo that his life abhorreth bread, and his ſoul dainty meat.*

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*--His soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers.--* And this way of instruction, as Job himself was at present under; so *Elibu*, in describing it, seems to accommodate his Expressions to the circumstances of Job's Sickness; to the allays and mitigations he might observe in them, and to the hopes he might have of a good issue and deliverance out of them. The circumstances of his disease, he describes by the pains in his bones, the weakness of his stomach, the consumption of his flesh, and that degree of wasting, that he seems (as we express it) as if he were just drawing on. *His soul draweth near unto the grave.* The allays and mitigations he might observe were these; That he had those about him, that might instruct him in the Will of God; that might bring him to a sense of himself; that might interpose with God in his behalf, and prevail for the removal of this present affliction. *If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness: Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down unto the pit; I have found a ransom.*

Lastly,



Lastly, The encouraging hopes he might have of a rescue from death (tho' his disease look't very dangerously) *ver. 25, 26. His flesh shall be fresher than a Child's, he shall return to the days of his youth, he shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him, and he shall see his face with joy.*

In the words thus explain'd, by what went before, and what follow after, there may arise these three Things observable.

1. The great incidency of humane Nature to sickness and bodily diseases; *His soul draweth near to the grave, &c.*

2. That sickness and bodily diseases, to which humane Nature is so incident, have a great deal of instruction in them; and it pleaseth God frequently to inflict them for this very end; that Men might be taught the knowledge of themselves, and their duty toward Him. This I gather from the tendency of the Argument that *Elihu* is upon; *viz.* showing the various methods by which it pleaseth God to teach Men the knowledge of his Will; sometimes by *Visions* and *Dreams in the night*; at other times, by *sickness* and other *calamities*.

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3. Lastly,

3. Lastly, It is further observable how great a blessing of Providence it is, and what an allay to the affliction, to enjoy one of the *Messengers* of God about a Sick-bed. Some excellent Person that may read Lectures upon Divine Providence, that may govern us in our behaviour toward God when under his correction and chastisement, and that may pray in our behalves for the removal of that Calamity, in his own good time. *If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness, &c.*

Of these in their Order.

I. I observe to you the great incidency of humane Nature to sickness and bodily diseases. The best of Men are not exempt from them. We have two great instances in *Job* and *David*; who both fell not onely under the power of common distempers, and weakneses of body, but diseases, as foul and noisom, as sore and painfull, as strange and exemplary, as have ever yet befallen the worst of Men. And as the best of Men are not exempt, so neither are the youngest, nor those of the strongest constitution. We  
may

may be gay and flourishing in all the Vigours of youth and health to day, and to morrow groaning under the pains and languishings of a sick-bed; not able to move an arme, or wink into a moment's rest; not able to bear the least food or support of Nature, much less to exercise the nobler faculties of Mind in any just thought or act of good reasoning.

This incidency to sickness and bodily diseases is founded, partly in the frame of our Natures, partly the common Accidents of Life, but especially (and without which, that Divine Hand that made us, would have secur'd us against all the Accidents of our nice and tender Composure) the great in-let to all Calamity, Sin, and our fatal Apostasie from God.

The very frame of our Natures. We are so fine a piece of Workmanship wrought off with such Applications of Wisdom as well as Power, and made up of such numberless dependencies, all so tender, and so easily interrupted; that, were we to consider the structure of our bodies, the small fibres, the necessary communication of parts, the strange ways of conveyance for



the nourishment of the whole, it might rather be a wonder every moment that we feel our selves in health and order, than any surprize to labour under an indispos'd Nature, which may be so easily over-turn'd by any peccant humour, by the least obstruction in any of its parts, by the redundancy, as well as defect, or decay of what, in a just and equal temperament, might be our support and defence. However, such is indeed our Contexture and Frame; that the very necessary use and exercise of the several parts for the maintenance of the whole, and of one another, do's wear and decay them, takes off their natural service, brings in a gradual death upon some of our parts, which becomes past all possibility of repair or revival, and (as the Learned Lord *Verulam* somewhere observes)

" puts us, in old Age, under the torments  
 " of *Mezentius*, that is, tyes the living to  
 " the dead; parts that are decay'd, and  
 " have ceas'd their Functions, to those that  
 " are alive and animated, and still at work,  
 " for the meer continuance of life and  
 " action. So that Old Age is one natural and unavoidable disease, which the strongest,



strongest, the best compos'd, the best us'd  
 Constitution cannot but fall under. And  
 thus the *Wise man* describes all the parts and  
 organs of the Body, as having by degrees  
 spent themselves off, into a perfect un-  
 viceableness in Old age, till the whole  
 structure it self comes to fall and be demo-  
 lish'd, *Eccles. 12. 2, 3, 6.* When the Sun, or  
 the Light, or the Moon, or the Stars begin to  
 be darken'd. When the keepers of the house  
 wemble, the strong men bowe themselves, and  
 the grinders cease, and they that look out of the  
 windows be darken'd-----When the silver cord  
 is loos'd, and the golden bowl is broken, or the  
 pitcher broken at the fountain, or the wheel bro-  
 ken at the cistern, &c. "That is, when all  
 "the faculties and powers of the Soul, the  
 "leading and the rational, the lower and  
 "the sensitive, shall begin to be obstructed  
 "in their several operations; and when the  
 "members of the Body shall betray their  
 "sensible decays: the nerves loose and en-  
 "feebld, the spirits low and unactive, the  
 "leggs and hands trembling, the teeth  
 "dropping out, the optick juices of the  
 "eye drying up, the brain, with all its de-  
 "fences, shatter'd, the circulation of the  
 "blood

"blood flow and languid: This is an unavoidable disease in nature, and closeth in the dissolution of the whole. But then,

2. The common accidents of life point to us the incidence of humane nature to bodily diseases. The constant returns of Spring and Autumn, pestilential airs, unhealthy seasons, immoderate exercise, or slothfull and undisturb'd ease, unwholsome diet, surfeits, either by excess, or something not of agreeable digestion; maims or bruises, by falls, or quarrels; natural propensities deriv'd from the loins of diseas'd parents, when the *flaming* *wire*, the first threds of life (if I may so express it) are wove amiss; and numberless other accidents, which time wou'd fail to reckon up, do necessarily expose the whole race of Mankind to distemper and infirmity, that might every moment take off the lustre and desirableness of life.

3. Lastly, I add also, a Consideration of Sin, and our fatal Apostasie from God, which was indeed the great and onely inlet to all humane Calamity. For without this, that Divine Hand that made us, wou'd have secur'd us against all the accidents of  
our

our nice and tender composure. It was Sin that brought sickness and disorder upon the Soul and Body of our first Parents, which *Adam* could not but derive upon his Posterity, when he must needs beget one in his own Likeness, and after his own Image. By one man (saith the Apostle) *sin* entred into the world, and death by *sin*, Rom. 5. 12. Now Sickness is the harbinger of Death, and had its same, both way, and time of entry into the World with Death it self. It was Sin that made the healthy and well-temper'd Climate of Paradise too hot for our first Parents. Sin that made the Earth so pregnant with noxious Vapours, and other fatal issues of her Womb. Sin that brought that Universal Curse upon the Creation, that every thing prov'd so unkindly that had been made either for service or sustenance. Sin that occasion'd that intire sickness in the whole Constitution of nature, that tainted our very Birth and Original, who otherwise must have come into the World with that equal poise of temper, that nothing wou'd have mov'd disorderly within, nothing have assailed impetuously without, so as to have blasted

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or impair'd this noble composure of ours, till it had pleas'd God, in all the gentle disposals of his Providence, to have call'd us out of this sphere of action, to the immediate enjoyment of himself.

Some usefull reflections upon this observable.

1. By all that has been said, what reasons have we of thankfulness, for every moments enjoyment or continuance of health; it is that which is so much the brightness and joy of present life, that, without it, no other advantages of Nature or Art can make the enjoyment of life so much as tolerable, much less desirable; and yet it is what may be broke in upon so easily, that nothing but one continu'd wonder of Divine Providence preserves it entire to any one of us. Bless the Lord, O my Soul, who healeth all thy diseases—who redeemeth thy life from destruction, &c. saith the Psalmist.

2. As we should be thankfull for Health, so also submissive in Sicknes. It is, we see, the common lot of humane Nature, the  
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Seeds of which we take in with our first Being. Diseases and Maladies are the Rods in God's hand to discipline the good, and punish the bad. Nay, I may further add, They are frequently the natural products of some men's sins, that do necessarily follow such or such vicious ways of life; upon all which accounts we are owing to the good pleasure of the Divine Will, where we enjoy so great a blessing any one day, and have reason to submit when it is otherwise. So much for that first Observable.

II. Come we, secondly, to observe, That sickness, and bodily diseases, have a great deal of instruction in them, and it pleases God frequently to inflict them for this very end; that Men might thereby be brought to the knowledge of themselves, and their duty toward Him. This I gather from the drift of the argument that *Elihu* is upon, wherein he is showing the various ways God had to teach and instruct Mankind; partly by *Visions and Dreams in the night*, strong and divine Impressions upon the Mind, which were never dispens'd or indulg'd

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dulg'd, but to those who by wisdom and seriousness, frequent Contemplation of God, and strictness in serving him, had been predispos'd to such Condescensions of Grace; And partly by sickness and bodily diseases, which he us'd as the more common means of reducing the disobedient, when they had given up themselves to all forgetfulness of God, contempt of Religion, and neglect of their immortal Souls. Now that the amendment and bettering of Men by these present chastisements, is the main end and design that God has in all, and that in his Visitations of this kind, there is very visible instruction, such as the meanest understandings may easily arrive at, may appear either from a Consideration of God, or the Calamity it self.

1. From a Consideration of God, who has all along made it plain in the Revelations of his Word, that he has that Love and Good-will to Mankind, that he never afflicts them for Affliction's sake, as delighting in their Groans, or thinking his Sovereignty best exercis'd by continu'd methods of punishment. He assures us, that *in all*

*our*

our afflictions he is afflicted, Isa. 63. 9. Besides, that he has given actual demonstration of this by his Providences. What other reason can be given that we at any time enjoy a moments health? God has the disposal of our Tempers and Constitutions, of the Air we breath in, the Food we eat, of the Seasons of the Year, the Influences of the Stars, the Vapours of the Earth, and what-ever might minister either to Sickness or Health; that in the least exerting of his Power, our Beauty and Gloss, Strength and Vigour might consume away like a Moth fretting a garment. So that our possessing a moments health, is a demonstration of the kindness and tenderness of Providence, that he do's not bring in these Calamities upon Men, meerly for the delight he hath in grieving them, but when it proves unavoidably necessary either to *chastise* or *correct* their follies. *The foolishness of Man perverteth his own ways; however, his heart at that time, and in that calamity, may fret against God.*



2. Consider we the Calamity it self, and what natural instruction arises thence: For instance.

1. By Diseases and Sickness, we are taught the absolute Vanity and uncertainty of this World, with all the Comforts of it; the beauty of all vanisheth before us upon a Sick-bed. What pleasure can the man, in the height of an acute distemper take, in his Honours, his large Fortunes, his beautiful Wife, his witty Children, and all his other Conveniencies of life! Much less, what relish can we suppose he has, in those Lufts of his, which once seem'd to administer such high satisfaction! Alas! all this is gone; the disorder within has taken off the *gusto* of all this; and he can as little taste the pleasures of life, as he can his ordinary food, which now is grown nauseous and intolerable.

2. By Sickness we gain an easier insight into our own guilt, and all the unreasonable provocations we have given the Almighty, throughout the whole Course of our Lives: Sometimes the Sin is read in the very distemper it self: Some feel their  
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excess and intemperance, in the flames of their Feaver : Some their uncleanness in their Aches or Ulcers ; others their sloth and idleness in the ill habits of body they have thereby contracted. However, under any calamity of this kind, we have reason to remember Sin in general, and our Sins in particular, because we may be assur'd, that the one is the direct fruit and product of the other. This is the Season therefore, for reflecting upon loss of Time, and a vain expence of all the precious moments of Life : the profuse embezzelling our Talents, our Parts, or other Trusts deposited with us for Purposes, to which we have not us'd or improv'd them.

This is the season of apprehending the displeasure of God, which, if in these less instances, it becomes so irksome and grievous, it may make us think how intolerable it would prove, should the whole Viols of it be pour'd out upon us in the other World. This, in a word, is a just season of representing Death, and Judgment, and Eternity to our Thoughts ; by all which we may grow wiser and better in all the future

ture management of that life that God may yet allot to us. Here is matter of sufficient instruction, and that which Diseases and Sickness most naturally, and most reasonably lead us out to discern and ponder on.

To close this second Observable, as usefully as may be, let me give one hint or two.

I. That if any of us have known what a fit of Sickness is, we would remember, and run over all those thoughts and impressions of Mind we felt at that time. It is hardly to be avoided at such a time, but that the follies of some will stare them in the face, will extort Confessions from them, will put them upon vehement resolutions, and hearty promises of amendment, if God would please to spare them but this once. This is an entertainment the Minister familiarly meets with, in his attendances on Sick-beds. How sensible are such of their former miscarriages! How resolv'd to change so foolish and provoking a Course of life, they have hitherto led, if mercifull  
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Providence would vouchsafe their recovery ! Would to God such were as capable of practising the wise instructions of Sickneſs, as they were receptive and apprehenſive of them at that time ! That they would keep up the warmth of thoſe Thoughts upon the return of Health, that had been enkindled by Sickneſs, and the proſpect of Death ! Conſider this one thing ; that if, upon recovery from Sickneſs, you forget thoſe inſtructions which that Seafon gave you, and violate thoſe ſolemn engagements you then put your ſelves under, you may both lay your ſelves open to ſome new inſtance of God's diſpleaſure, and a more fatal ſeizure that may end in Death : And alſo, you may have ſteel'd your Minds with an acquir'd hardneſs and impenitency of Temper, that perhaps none of thoſe kindly impreſſions may ever return more, and the next paſſage from a Sick-bed, may be into a miſerable Eternity.

2. If you ever do fall under this diſcipline of the Almighty, remember to improve this advantage, where it may lye within your reach, of a *Messenger, an Interpreter,*



*preter, one among a thousand*, which may be so usefull, and serve to so good purposes at that time. Which leads to the last Observable in the Text.

III. Lastly, I observe to you, how great a blessing of Providence it is, and what an allay to so great a Calamity, if we have the advantage of a *Messenger*, an *Interpreter*, &c. that may be helpfull to us, in any of the difficulties of that Season.

Some, by this passage in my Text, would understand the Ministry of an *Angel*; express'd by these Titles, *Messenger*, *Interpreter*, *One among a thousand*. And indeed, in the Times when there was nothing of a standing, reveal'd Rule and Law of Faith and Practice, it is not improbable but the Ministry of Angels was more frequently and more visibly indulg'd toward good Men. And questionless, it was a pure mark of Divine Favour, where the Sick person at any time met with such Condescensions of Grace, that such an *One* of all those *thousands* that attend the Throne of God,

God, should stand at his Bed-side, to ennoble his Mind with wiser and clearer Notions of God, more comfortable prospects of another World, or a pleasing assurance of a longer date and term of years here. But this we need not either stretch, or confine this passage to.

*Elihu* seems to hint to *Job*, the present mixtures and allays of Divine Goodness, in that while God had brought *Job* into so deplorable a condition, by sickness and pains of the worst kind; yet he had condescended to furnish him with religious, usefull, and excellent Friends, that might interpret to him the Will and Meaning of God in this present Dispensation, and might pray for the removal of so sad an affliction from him. So that in Analogy to this, we have reason to account it an admirable Privilege that we may have the attendance of God's *Messengers* at our Sick-beds to assist us with their Exhortations, their Reproofs, their Directions, their Comforts, their Prayers, and all the usefull Applications of their Office and Ministry, as they may be any way serviceable to relieve

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us at present, or further us in the great Concernments of Eternity. The Privilege may appear chiefly upon these accounts.

1. The great indisposedness that probably our own Minds may be in (at such a time as that) to do any thing to good purpose our selves; the disorder of the whole Man, when bodily pains, want of rest, an hurry of the spirits, sickness and nauseousness of stomach, affection of the brain and the like, must in all likelihood greatly interrupt all compos'd Thought or Reasoning, and may easily take the Mind off from its greatest Concernments by a vehement desire of present ease and refreshment: then to have a faithfull *Messenger* of God by us, that may put us in mind of higher things; that may help us in our Meditations; may supply us with Materials of Thought and Reflection; that may lead us into a sense of our selves, and put us upon looking back upon past follies, and to help us forward in those acts of Repentance which are requir'd of us in the Gospel; thereby either preparing us for Heaven, or making



is more fit to live in this World, if restor'd and recover'd. Surely this is of great advantage, which a good Mind would be apt to esteem as some way Compensating for all the uneasiness and other troublesome Appendages of a Sick-bed.

2. The great Mistakes we may be apt to fall under at such a time, makes it of great advantage to us, to be under the direction and steerage of such an one. Our own Organs of Thinking may then be so much out of order, that we may not have the same Idea's of Things which in our Health and Vigor of Reasoning we have once had. But besides that, there is a most busie Adversary that neglects no such opportunities of attacking the weak and disabled Powers of Mind at that time. He will then be casting all the Blinds, and representing all the false Scenes imaginable. Sometimes he will flatter the Man into a *better* opinion of himself than he ought to have, by which he would prevent his necessary Repentance. Here the faithful *Messenger*, and due *Interpreter* of things, is infinitely

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nitely usefull: To let a Man see himself and his lamentable Condition through Sin; the need he has of the great Expiation; the necessity of Repentance, and earnest importunity with God for Pardon and Forgiveness. Sometimes again, he will encrease and aggravate the Sinner's guilt beyond all *just* measures, as if his Sins, both for the number, and the nature of them, were beyond the compass of Divine Grace. Here again, the *Messenger*, the *Interpreter*, the *One among a thousand*, comes in seasonably, explains the Nature of the New Covenant, recites and insists upon the Promises, which are as large and boundless as our Sins have been; and have no feebler a Confirmation, than the Blood of *Jesus*, and the Oath of *God*. He informs him of the Nature of true Repentance; and by the just Notes of it, shows him, that what he now acts is true and real; Nay, he can lay open those very *Wiles of the Devil*, by which he would at *that time*, be perplexing his Faith and Hopes in God. In a word, sometimes the Devil will be aggrandizing the affliction it self, as if it were out of the ordinary way of  
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Providence, and an evident token of God's Wrath; or that it is not what he has deserv'd, but what he may justly murmur and repine at. Here this excellent *Interpreter* can, by a skilfull reading upon Providence, let the Man see, that *no temptation has befallen him, but what is common to Man; that no Man knows love or hatred by these things; that affliction is so far from being the mark of God's wrath, or of a reprobate state, that it is rather a token of his tender and fatherly compassion, who therefore chastiseth, because he loveth them, and would do them good in the latter end; that it is far less than his iniquities deserve, and that therefore there is all the reason in the World for his entire submission and resignation.* In these and other cases where the *Clinick* is so prone to mistakes concerning either himself or God; how usefull may such an excellent Person be to *interpret* to him the Word and Providences of God, to keep him right in all just Ideas and Apprehensions of things!

3. Lastly,



3. Lastly, He is of further advantage to implore God in the behalf of such, either for the removal of his hand, or for a good issue and conclusion in the end; It is no ordinary Privilege that, when our own Minds perhaps are sharing in the disorders of our Bodies, we should then have the Prayers of some good Men, who, in a fellow-feeling of our infirmities, can heartily and in earnest recommend us to God. *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous Man availeth much, Jam. 5. 16.* Hence his direction to the faithfull, that *if any be sick among them, they should call for the Elders of the Church, and they shall pray over them—and the prayer of Faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, ver. 14, 15.* We don't indeed, with those of the Church of Rome, pretend to keep up the Ceremony of *anointing with Oyl*, which is also directed in this place; because the Power it self, that is, the gift of Healing, of which this Unction was the Symbol, is so long ceas'd, and therefore it is highly proper that the Symbol it self should cease too. But Prayer is  
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a standing Duty, and hath its abiding Effects; if not in the actual recovery of the Man (which yet not improbably has been frequently obtain'd by Prayer) however may not prove ineffectual, as to his Eternal Salvation; both which seem to be comprehended in this last passage of my Text: *Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom.* This might lead me into a large field of discourse, but I will shut up the whole, with an usefull Inference or two.

1. We may hence learn to live under a daily wise expectation of such a Calamity as this. Our sins and follies of Life may easily provoke God. Our frail and obnoxious Nature daily exposes us; and Old Age, which is one continu'd and unavoidable Sicknes, will ere long creep upon the strongest of us, which therefore may put the wisest of us into a just expectation of such an hour. But then,

2. If it should be our lot to be thus dealt with, let us not despise this indulgence  
of

of Providence, the Helps and Ministries of him whom God hath appointed his Messenger, his Interpreter; that he may minister to us in all those usefull assistances, of which we may then stand in so much need, and for which the Church has accordingly provided such tender and comprehensive Offices.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be all Honour, and Glory, and Praise, now and for ever, Amen.

THE END.